23: Franck--341 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 164, 291

"Women were bathing children and themselves here also, especially now toward sunset, but no one came to stare at me, though in China there would have been a regular circus audience. Nor was this for lack of energy, for on the whole these were a well built, muscular, and very healthy-looking people, with few if any signs of a social disease so common in Annam and China and with almost none of the filth diseases. Though the women all showed their breasts and thought nothing of it, one never saw even a bathing man completely naked. So-called barbarian peoples, though they commonly wear only a loin-cloth or its feminine equivalent, are usually as exacting about having that in place as we are with our own clothing."

68: Mouhot--90-91 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 162, 164, 342, 361

"At Khao-Khoc, [HD: north of Saraburi in Siam]although the second king often visits it, there is no landing-place, nor even steps cut in the steep banks to aid the ascent.

Immediately after landing I set off to look for a lodging, having been informed that I should find numerous vacant houses belonging to mandarins, amongst which I might make my choice. My men and I hunted amid the brushwood, often sinking up to our knees in mud, but could discover only seven or eight Laotian huts, the inhabitants of which form the nucleus of the population of this future stronghold, now peaceful and hospitable agriculturists, who would be deeply afflicted, and still more terrified, if ever their echoes should repeat the roar of cannon and varied sounds of war. As for the royal habitations, I could not reach them, for the whole ground, excepting a strip about fifty feet broad next the river, is a swamp; and the narrow paths are obstructed by bushes and tall grass, which had had time to grow during the six or eight months that have elapsed since the King has visited the place.

Not being able to find a lodging, some men from the village joined us, and we all set to work to cut down bamboos, with which to construct one, which was soon accomplished; and in this hut, open to every wind, we took up our abode.

I was told that a white elephant had just been taken in Laos, and had been sent off to Bangkok under the care of a mandarin. [91]

All the inhabitants of the village, amounting perhaps to about fifty, have brought their children to me, begging for remedies; some for fevers, others for dysentery or

rheumatism. I have not heard of any cases of leprosy here, as at Khao-Tchioulaü, but the children are repulsively dirty; they are covered with a coating of filth, which makes them resemble little negroes, and the greater number of them are shaking with fever."

68: Mouhot--134 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 291, 302, 164, 826

"The Laotians [HD: in the territory between Loeui and Pak Lai] much resemble the Siamese: a different pronunciation and slow manner of speech being all that distinguishes their language. The women wear petticoats, and keep their hair long, which, when combed, gives the younger ones a more interesting appearance than those have who live on the banks of the Menam; but, at an advanced age, with their unkempt locks thrown negligently over one temple, and their immense goîtres, which they admire, they are repulsively ugly."

68: Mouhot--141 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 147, 155, 164

"Muang-Moune-Wa. [HD: northwest of Pak Lai] -- This place is surrounded by mountains. I am very feverish and tremble with cold, although the thermometer shows 80 degrees of heat. I am getting tired of these people, a race of children, heartless and unenergetic. I sigh and look everywhere for a man, and cannot find one; here all tremble at the stick, and the enervating climate makes them incredibly apathetic."

68: Mouhot--158 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 164

"3rd September. [HD: 1861] -- We left Bane-Nakhau, [HD: a village north of Pak Lai in Luang Prabang province] and arrived about midday at a rice-field, where we passed the night. All the women here have goîtres, often enormous and most repulsive. Even young girls of nine or ten are to be seen with them, but rarely the men."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on 584
particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an 576
etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too
far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the 346
people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is 531
little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood,
rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by
religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas,
quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built 771
as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, 755
containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of 778
which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here,
where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little
degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic concep-
tion; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of
the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee
subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised
in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's
chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any
complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of
the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his
own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the
people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps [164] ●
those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic 778
statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn 789
smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a 892
thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony
who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of
Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I 000
wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

gilt and jewels. The wily merchants accepted all these kindnesses 439
in the hope of extracting great profits from their packet (1). 175•

1. Cf. Cabaton, op. cit. /Le Laos et les Neerlandais au dix-septieme siecle (1913). /

The audience took place near the pyramid of That-Luong which was entirely covered with gold plate. The king, surrounded by all his court, stood in a great temple and had the newcomers sit on mats under the gallery. The following day danses, combats and /574/
water jousts were given in their honor on the river bank. Souligna-Vongsa was present, carried on a golden chair, and came and sat on a /108/ balcony erected over the river. In the evening more than two hundred fiery pirogues went down the Mekong. "The river seemed to be on fire."

As time passed the merchandise sold well, thanks to the gifts distributed to the king, the princes, the princesses and the officers. The Dutch cleverly disparaged the Siamese of Ayuthya as traders of little faith, offered to settle a misunderstanding which had arisen between the sovereigns of Lan-Xang and Cambodia, and obtained the Laotians' promise to deliver them enormous quantities of benzoin and gum lac. They finally left on December 24, "profoundly impressed with the wealth and splendor" of the kingdom of Vientiane (1).

1. Van Wusthof left without his two assistants, whom he left with the king to await the gifts destined for Van Diemen and the Laotian "ambassador" who was to accompany them. (Francis Garnier, Bulletin de la Societe de geographie, 1871.)

If we are to believe Van Wusthof, this city then had a huge 174
population, while Luang-Prabang was nothing more than a deserted 164
city. A terrible cholera epidemic had decimated its population, 369
and those who were left had come to life in Vientiane.

He also confirms the kingdom's frontiers as stated by the Annals and the perfect relations which /109/ Lan-Xang maintained with all its neighbors.

On the other hand he does not shed any light -- rather the con- 439
trary -- on the obscure period which preceded Souligna's accession 643•
to the throne. Indeed he writes with perfect serenity: "the present 175•
king inherited the crown three years ago from his brother, who died

132 Vegetation dries out then, and some plants and trees even lose their leaves. The earth cracks and pulverizes under the action of the drought and sun.

2. METEOROLOGICAL STATIONS

[654] The meteorological system of Laos includes:

1. Main stations:

Vien-Tiane, administrative capital of Laos and seat of the Superior Residency.

[112] 2. Secondary stations:

Luang-Prabang, Savannakhet, Khong, Attopeu.

3. SANITARY CONDITIONS

132 164 At the beginning of the rainy season the body is tired out after the excessive drought and heat of the last two months, and is predisposed to attack by the fever-bearing mosquitoes and various bacillae for which river water serves as a vehicle after it has watered the vegetation. It is then that the many different kinds of fever strike, with their characteristics varying depending on season, region, race, individual and temperament. Attacks which take a pernicious form are rare, however, both in the natives--who are nevertheless without preventive treatment--and in Europeans, who are better protected by a good diet and specific medication.

To be sure, in a form which may be more or less benign these attacks of paludism end, in the long run, by damaging even those temperaments which are most robust in appearance, especially if the latter suffer from any kind of stomach, liver or intestinal disorder. It is also at this time of the year, as well as during the first cold spells, that dysenteric diarrhea and diarrhea in the strict sense occur, striking both natives and Europeans.

The cause of these afflictions may be attributed, in May and June, to excessive ingestion of insufficiently ripe fruits and vegetables, and in November and December to nocturnal abdominal chills. The various liver ailments also strike during the changes in season.

Cholera is epidemic in the country, and reappears at more or less distant intervals. Each year, however, diarrheic cholerine claims a number of victims among the native population.

149: Reinach--84 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
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Europeans are usually immune to attacks by Asiatic cholera and only rarely suffer from its effects.

Smallpox is endemic in Laos. Very few persons above [113] a certain age have escaped this terrible disease, and nearly all the natives bear more or less apparent marks thereof. In the last two years vaccination has been widespread among the Laotian populations and has immunized children and the adults not stricken.

Tubes of vaccine serum are sent to all the provinces of Laos by the Pasteur Institute of Saigon. [Illustration here] Fresh batches are sent every two weeks so that the serum will retain its effectiveness. Since vaccination tours would absorb almost all the time of the three colonial physicians in Laos because of the extent of the country and the slowness of communication, the commissioners who are heads of provinces have trained mandarins as student vaccinators. The latter are supplied with inoculation needles [plumes "vaccinostyles"] and "serum" which is renewed as need arises, and practice vaccination in the interior of the provinces, where they themselves train other pupils. In sum, mutual vaccination is the rule (1).

(1) In Laos as in Cambodia, vaccination is making constant progress.

Lower Laos may be regarded as being almost completely free of smallpox epidemics. It is more difficult to protect Upper Laos. By way of the Mékong the tubes of vaccine sent out by the Pasteur Institute of Saigon used to take eighty days to reach Luang-Prabang, and because of this long delay the vaccine, which only retains its properties for about seventy days, used to lose all its effectiveness by the time it reached its destination. Nowadays the Institute sends the tubes by way of Tonkin (Black River as far as Lai-Chau and from Lai-Chau to Luang-Prabang by tram), and the percentage of successes obtained has considerably increased.

(Report of the Superior Resident.)

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[114] There are also three other afflictions endemic in Laos. These are rheumatic pains, purulent ophthalmia and various skin disorders. The rheumatic pains, which cause the death of a number of individuals every year, generally appear in August and September, that is to say at the end of the period when the ricefields are plowed

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and prepared. This affliction is doubtless due to the Laotian peasants' prolonged stay in the hot and nauseating mud of the ricefields.

164 Cases of purulent ophthalmia make their appearance between December and March and, in addition to a special predisposition of the race to this disease, its cause must be attributed to the many air currents and drafts which find their way between the walls of houses during the season of great winds.

This affliction, which affects mainly children and adolescents, is aggravated by uncleanliness and by the use of already contaminated bandages. Even the most serious cases of ophthalmia disappear, often within a few days, when treated with boric acid solution or zinc sulphate applied by means of antiseptic cotton wool or gauze.

The skin disorders are leprosy, alopecia, frambesia, prurigo, a variety of watery skin disorders and types of pityriasis,and stubborn sores caused by wounds by sharp weapons, tools or splinters.

At the beginning of 1900 Dr. Janselme of the Saint-Louis Hospital went on a mission in Laos the purpose of which was to diagnose and identify the existing skin disorders as well as to study treatments which might be applied.

[115] Goiter is also quite widespread among the mountainfolk, especially among those who drink water which has flowed over calcareous rock or serpentine. One sees men, women and even children afflicted with monstrous double and triple goiters, the volume of which often exceeds that of a man's head.

Syphilis is also prevalent in Laos. It was imported by Siamese soldiers and is widespread only in the regions where they stayed most. Sufficient proof of this fact is seen in its absence in the regions inhabited by the Khas.

744 Ever since our settlement in Laos the health service has maintained a strict surveillance and its dispensaries have cared for sick persons of both sexes (1).

(1) There are three field infirmaries in Laos directed by Colonial physicians and located at Khong, Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang. Unfortunately, the reports sent by these physicians to the head of the health service have not been published.

149: Reinach--86 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
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4. HYGIENE

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The choice of dwelling sites is of prime importance from the point of view of hygiene. Insofar as necessities permit, Europeans in Laos should seek to satisfy the following conditions:

1. Avoid building in regions which are low, hemmed in, formed of damp alluvia or near swamps or stagnant ponds.

2. Also avoid living on the banks of small watercourses and choose instead, insofar as possible, the larger rivers, especially near the point where they join a sea-going river or on the banks of the sea-going river itself (2).

(2) We have seen in Chapter II that the Mekong is the only river in Laos which flows into the sea.

3. Build houses on an eminence, no matter how small, and preferably on a rock foundation or on sand or on alluvia which are sandy and permeable to water.

4. Houses may be of brick or quarry-stone. They may be roofed [116] with tiles, wooden shingles, bamboo lath or ordinary thatch, depending on the local resources. They must be raised above the ground (at least 1.5 meters), and air must be able to circulate underneath.

5. However, a house made of wood or of a double thickness of bamboo lath can be as healthy as a brick house if it is carefully built.

6. Houses should be large, well ventilated and surrounded by [Illustration here] broad verandas provided with awnings made of strips of rattan. There should at least be verandas on the south and west.

7. Floors must be such that they can be washed with running water, while mats and rugs must be kept to a strict minimum and be easy to move. The best procedure is to use a colored plaster or an encaustic and apply it to the floor of the rooms and verandas and to the bottoms of walls and partitions half a meter up from the floor.

8. Furniture must be light and easy to move, clean and even wash. Bent wood, in the Thonet style, and rattan fulfill these two conditions perfectly.

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/117/ 9. Avoid hangings and draperies insofar as possible. Have only folding doors and windows with two interchangeable sets of panels for each (glass for winter and shutters for the hot season).

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262 It is thus that the Missionaries, for example, whose resources are extremely limited and do not enable them to use imported foodstuffs, remain in the land for many long years without any great damage to their health. It goes without saying that one should avoid overindulgence in food, and especially in alcoholic beverages. Drinking iced tea at and between meals gives excellent results, but then it is well to take a small quantity of pure wine. Coffee is an indispensable tonic and stimulant for aiding digestion and fighting off the heaviness which generally manifests itself after meals.

000 One should avoid long siestas immediately after the noonday meal. Newcomers will do well not to succomb to this damaging habit, which slows digestion, softens the organism and in the long run robs the brain of its lucidity and vigor. It is preferable to move about a bit immediately after meals on the verandas or in the rooms of the house. Billiards provide excellent exercise in this case.

Around two o'clock, when digestion is complete and before business is resumed, a cold shower is extremely hygienic. [120] According to one's tastes and temperament one may take a shower bath, pour water over oneself with the help of a basin held in the hand, or bathe in a tub with a large sponge.

In the evening after sunset it is well to take a little exercise in the form of horseback riding, bicycling, tennis, etc. But one should avoid going too far and becoming tired, since all that is needed is enough effort to maintain the suppleness and elasticity of the muscles. After such exercise one should take a quick shower or tub bath, then, if desired, a small glass of generous or tonic wine such as quinquina, cola, coca, Dériles wine, etc.

One should avoid all the so-called alcoholic aperitifs, which necessitate the use of a great deal of water and ice, for they cause overabundant perspiration and, by filling the stomach, retard the secretion of the gastric juices. It is precisely this secretion which gives the sensation of appetite.

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757 In the matter of general preventive hygiene, a great many persons will do well to follow the regimen outlined below. Every day one should take a few centigrams of salts of quinine, hydrobromide, bihydrobromide, sulfate, etc. If excessive fatigue is anticipated as a consequence of prolonged exposure to the sun, a long march or a stay in the forest, one should take a larger dose of quinine. The dose may be as large, depending on temperament and experience, as one gram for the sulphate and fifty centigrams for the hydrobromide.

This preventive measure is recommended by Laveran, who discovered the haematozoon of paludism, and is followed by a great many persons. It has always yielded excellent results, even among the natives who are also subject to the fever (1).

(1) According to a report by the Superior Resident in Laos, in which mention is made of a note by M. Morin, the government commissioner in Vien-Tiane, there is a kind of liana in this province which is quite common in the region and which the Laotians call Khua-Khao-hô.

This liana, which the Siamese call Bora-phet, is no other, according to the dictionary by Pallegoix, than the Cocculus verrucosus of the Menispermaceae family.

The taste of the sap which it contains, when newly cut, is particularly bitter. When dried the liana itself retains a very pronounced taste of quinine.

Native doctors use it in various preparations for treating obstinate fevers and jaundice in its various forms.

At the same time as the Khao-hô, pieces of heartwood from two hardwood trees are generally used. We have been unable to discover their exact names, but the active medicinal agent, according to the natives, is primarily Cocculus verrucosus. (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, August 1, 1900).

[121] The daily ingestion of a small quantity of quinine keeps the blood in a toxic state for fever-bearing microbes, and it must be constantly saturated if one wishes to prevent their invasion and growth.

Some persons also get along very well on a treatment which consists in taking a purgation of sodium or magnesium sulphate, or else an emetic of ipecacuanha, every three months (April, July, October and January).

Whenever a feeling of torpor, stiffness in the nape of the neck or the shivers which are the forerunners of fever manifest themselves, one and a half to two grams of ipeca and one gram of quinine, after vomiting has stopped, will overcome the illness and reduce the attack to its most benign form.

In sum, one can keep in excellent health in Laos, by following these few recommendations, if one has a good stomach, solid insides and an intact liver. A stay in this country can therefore not be